

17, 2001, and is necessary to prevent the fishery from exceeding the TAC established by the emergency rule that was published May 8, 2001.

**DATES:** Effective 0001 hrs, local time, August 17, 2001, through 2400 hrs, local time, November 14, 2001.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** E. Martin Jaffe, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978-281-9272, fax 978-281-9135, e-mail martin.jaffe@noaa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On May 8, 2001, NMFS published a red crab emergency interim rule (66 FR 23182) to address concerns that overfishing of the red crab resource may be occurring within the EEZ from Cape Hatteras Light, NC, northward to the U.S.-Canada border. This action contained measures that included a TAC of 2.5 million lb (1,134 mt) of red crab for the 180-day period of effectiveness for the rule. To help ensure that the TAC is not exceeded, this rule also contained regulations that require the closure of the directed red crab fishery as of the date NMFS determines that the total landings of red crab will reach or exceed the TAC. NMFS is required to publish notification of such closure in the **Federal Register** (50 CFR 648.264).

NMFS has determined, based on landings and other available information, that 100 percent of the TAC for red crab will be harvested by August 17, 2001. Therefore, effective 0001 hrs, local time, August 17, 2001, through 2400 hrs, local time, November 14, 2001, notwithstanding any other regulations of Subpart M of 50 CFR part 648, vessels may not fish for, or possess, red crab harvested from the EEZ in excess of 100 lb (45.4 kg) per trip. If NMFS decides to recommend a 180-day extension of the emergency rule to the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), and the Secretary approves, a notification will be published in the **Federal Register** to inform the industry.

#### Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: August 3, 2001.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 010112013-1013-01; I.D. 080301A]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shallow-water Species Fishery by Vessels using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for species that comprise the shallow-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), except for vessels fishing for pollock using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA open to directed fishing for pollock. This action is necessary because the fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2001 halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been caught.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 4, 2001, until 1200 hrs, A.l.t., October 1, 2001.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The Pacific halibut bycatch allowance for the GOA trawl shallow-water species fishery, which is defined at § 679.21 (d)(3)(iii)(A), was established by the Final 2001 Harvest Specifications and Associated Management Measures for the Groundfish Fisheries Off Alaska (66 FR 7276, January 22, 2001), adjusted (66 FR 17087, March 29, 2001), and amended (66 FR 34852, July 2, 2001) for the fourth season, the period July 1, 2001, through October 1, 2001, as 200 metric tons.

In accordance with § 679.21 (d)(7)(i), the Administrator, Alaska Region,

NMFS, has determined that the fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2001 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl shallow-water species fishery in the GOA has been caught. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for species included in the shallow-water species fishery by vessels using trawl gear in the GOA, except for vessels fishing for pollock using pelagic trawl gear in those portions of the GOA open to directed fishing for pollock. The species and species groups that comprise the shallow-water species fishery are: pollock, Pacific cod, shallow-water flatfish, flathead sole, Atka mackerel, and "other species".

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts may be found in the regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f).

#### Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds that the need to immediately implement this action to prevent exceeding the fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2001 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl shallow-water species fishery in the GOA constitutes good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553 (b)(3)(B) and 50 CFR 679.20 (b)(3)(iii)(A), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Similarly, the need to implement these measures in a timely fashion to prevent exceeding the fourth seasonal apportionment of the 2001 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the trawl shallow-water species fishery in the GOA constitutes good cause to find that the effective date of this action cannot be delayed for 30 days. Accordingly, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d), a delay in the effective date is hereby waived.

This action is required by § 679.21 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: August 3, 2001.

**Bruce C. Morehead**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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